

MOSAICA.

A Dramatic Poem.

BY

W. B. YEATS.

WITH A

Frontispiece Portrait of the Author

By J. B. YEATS.

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MOSADA.



"And my Lord Cardinal hath had strange days in his youth."

Extract from a Memoir of the Fifteenth Century.

MOSADA,	...	...	...	A Moorish Lady.
EBREMAR,	...	...	...	A Monk.
COLA,	...	...	...	A Lame Boy.

MONKS AND INQUISITORS.

SCENE I.

A Little Moorish Room in the Village of Azubia.

In the centre of the room a chafing dish.

Mosada. [alone] Three times the roses have grown less and less,
As slowly Autumn climbed the golden throne
Where sat old Summer fading into song,
And thrice the peaches flushed upon the walls,
And thrice the corn around the sickles flamed,
Since 'mong my people, tented on the hills,
He stood a messenger. In April's prime
(Swallows were flashing their white breasts above
Or perching on the tents, a-weary still
From waste seas cross'd, yet ever garrulous)
Along the velvet vale I saw him come :
In Autumn, when far down the mountain slopes
The heavy clusters of the grapes were full,
I saw him sigh and turn and pass away ;
For I and all my people were accurst
Of his sad God ; and down among the grass
Hiding my face, I cried long, bitterly.
Twas evening, and the cricket nation sang
Around my head and danced among the grass ;
And all was dimness till a dying leaf

Slid circling down and softly touched my lips
 With dew as though 'twere sealing them for death.
 Yet somewhere in the footsore world we meet
 We two before we die, for Azolar
 The star-taught Moor said thus it was decreed
 By those wan stars that sit in company
 Above the Alpujarras on their thrones,
 That when the stars of our nativity
 Draw star to star, as on that eve he passed
 Down the long valleys from my people's tents,
 We meet—we two.

*[She opens the casement—the mingled sound of the voices and
 laughter of the apple gatherers floats in.]*

How merry all these are
 Among the fruit. But yon, lame Cola crouches
 Away from all the others. Now the sun—
 A-shining on the little crucifix
 Of silver hanging round lame Cola's neck—
 Sinks down at last with yonder minaret
 Of the Alhambra black athwart his disk;
 And Cola seeing, knows the sign and comes.
 Thus do I burn these precious herbs whose smoke
 Pours up and floats in fragrance o'er my head
 In coil on coil of azure.

[Enter Cola.] All is ready.

Cola. Mosada, it is then so much the worse.
 I will not share your sin.

Mosada. It is no sin
 That you shall see on yonder glowing cloud
 Pictured, where wander the beloved feet
 Whose footfall I have longed for, three sad summers—
 Why these new fears?

Cola. The servant of the Lord,
 The dark still man, has come, and says 'tis sin.

Mosada. They say the wish itself is half the sin.
 Then has this one been sinned full many times,
 Yet 'tis no sin—my father taught it me.
 He was a man most learned and most mild,
 Who, dreaming to a wondrous age, lived on

Tending the roses round his lattice door.
For years his days had dawned and faded thus
Among the plants ; the flowery silence fell
Deep in his soul, like rain upon a soil
Worn by the solstice fierce, and made it pure.
Would he teach any sin ?

Cola.

Gaze in the cloud

Yourself.

Mosada. None but the innocent can see.

Cola. They say I am all ugliness ; lame-footed
I am ; one shoulder turned awry—why then
Should I be good ? But you are beautiful.

Mosada. I cannot see.

Cola. The beetles, and the bats,
And spiders, are my friends, I'm theirs, and they are
Not good ; but you are like the butterflies.

Mosada. I cannot see ! I cannot see ! but you
Shall see a thing to talk on when you're old,
Under a lemon tree beside your door ;
And all the elders sitting in the sun,
Will wondering listen, and this tale shall ease
For long, the burthen of their talking griefs.

Cola. Upon my knees I pray you, let it sleep,
The vision.

Mosada. You're pale and weeping, child.
Be not afraid, you'll see no fearful thing.
Thus, thus I beckon from her viewless fields—
Thus beckon to our aid a Phantom fair
And calm, robed all in raiment moony white.
She was a great enchantress once of yore,
Whose dwelling was a tree-wrapt island, lulled
Far out upon the water world and ringed
With wonderful white sand, where never yet
Were furl'd the wings of ships. There in a dell
A lily blanchèd place, she sat and sang,
And in her singing wove around her head
White lilies, and her song flew forth afar
Along the sea ; and many a man grew hushed
In his own house or 'mong the merchants grey,

Hearing the far off singing guile and groaned,
 And manned an argosy and sailing died.
 In the far isle she sang herself asleep
 At last. But now I wave her to my side.

Cola. Stay, stay, or I will hold your white arms down.
 Ah me, I cannot reach them—here and there
 Darting you wave them, darting in the vapour.
 Heard you? Your lute upon the wall has sounded !
 I feel a finger drawn across my cheek !

Mosada. The phantoms come ; ha ha ! they come, they come !
 I wave them hither, my breast heaves with joy.
 Ah ! now I'm eastern-hearted once again,
 And while they gather round my beckoning arms,
 I'll sing the songs the dusky lovers sing,
 Wandering in sultry palaces of Ind,
 A lotus in their hands—

[*The door is flung open. Enter the Officers of the Inquisition.*]

First Inquisitor. Young Moorish girl
 Taken in magic. In the Church's name
 I here arrest thee.

Mosada. It is Allah's will.
 Touch not this boy, for he is innocent.

Cola. Forgive ! for I have told them everything.
 They said I'd burn in hell unless I told
 Them all, and let them find you in the vapour.

[*She turns away—he clings to her dress.*]
 Forgive me !

Mosada. It was Allah's will.

Second Inquisitor. Now cords.

Mosada. No need to bind my hands. Where are ye, sirs,
 For ye are hid with vapours?

Second Inquisitor. Round the stake
 The vapour is much thicker.

Cola. God ! the stake !
 Ye said that ye would fright her from her sin—
 No more ; take me instead of her, great sirs.
 She was my only friend ; I'm lame you know—
 One shoulder twisted, and the children cry
 Names after me.

First Inquisitor. Lady—

Mosada. I come.

Cola [*following.*] Forgive.

Forgive, or I will die.

Mosada [*stooping and kissing him*]. 'Twas Allah's will.

SCENE II.

A Room, the building of the Inquisition of Granada, lit by stained window, picturing St. James of Spain.

Monks and Inquisitors.

First Monk. Will you not hear my last new song?

First Inquisitor. Hush, hush!

So she must burn you say.

Second Inquisitor She must in truth.

First Inquisitor. Will he not spare her life? How would one matter
When there are many?

Second Monk. Ebremar will stamp

This heathen horde away. You need not hope;

And know you not she kissed that pious child

With poisonous lips, and he is pining since?

First Monk. You're full of wordiness. Come, hear my song.

Second Monk. In truth an evil race; why strive for her,
A little Moorish girl?

Second Inquisitor. Small worth.

First Monk. My song—

First Inquisitor. I had a sister like her once my friend,

[*Touching the first Monk on the shoulder.*]

Where is our brother Peter? When you're nigh,

He is not far. I'd have him speak for her.

I saw his jovial mood bring once a smile

To sainted Ebremar's sad eyes. I think

He loves our brother Peter in his heart.

If Peter would but ask her life—who knows?

First Monk. He digs his cabbages. He brings to mind

That song I've made—is of a Russian tale

Of Holy Peter of the Burning Gate:

A saint of Russia in a vision saw

[*Sings*]

A stranger new arisen wait
By the door of Peter's gate,
And he shouted Open wide
Thy sacred door, but Peter cried,
No, thy home is deepest hell,
Deeper than the deepest well.
Then the stranger softly crew
Cock-a-doodle-doodle-doo !
Answered Peter : Enter in
Friend ; but 'twere a deadly sin
Ever more to speak a word
Of any unblessed earthly bird.

First Inquisitor. Be still, I hear the step of Ebremar.
Yonder he comes ; bright-eyed, and hollow-cheeked
From fasting—see, the red light slanting down
From the great painted window wraps his brow,
As with an aureole.

[*Ebremar enters—they all bow to him.*]

First Inquisitor. My suit to you—

Ebremar. I will not hear ; the Moorish girl must die.
I will burn heresy from this mad earth,
And—

First Inquisitor. Mercy is the manna of the world.

Ebremar. The wages of sin is death.

Second Monk.

No use.

First Inquisitor. My lord, if it must be, I pray descend
Yourself into the dungeon 'neath our feet
And importune with weighty words this Moor,
That she foreswear her heresies and save
Her soul from seas of endless flame in hell.

Ebremar. I speak alone with servants of the Cross
And dying men—and yet—but no, farewell.

Second Monk. No use.

Ebremar. Away ! [*They go.*] Hear oh ! thou enduring God,
Who giveth to the golden-crested wren
Her hanging mansion. Give to me, I pray,
The burthen of thy truth. Reach down thy hands
And fill me with thy rage, that I may bruise

The heathen. Yea, and shake the sullen kings
Upon their thrones. The lives of men shall flow
As quiet as the little rivulets
Beneath the sheltering shadow of thy Church,
And thou shalt bend, enduring God, the knees
Of the great warriors whose names have sung
The world to its fierce infancy again.

SCENE III.

*The dungeon of the Inquisition. The morning of the Auto-da-Fe
dawns dimly through a barred window. A few faint stars
are shining. Swallows are circling in the dimness without.*

Mosada. Oh! swallows, swallows, swallows, will ye fly
This eve, to-morrow, or to-morrow night
Above the farm-house by the little lake
That's rustling in the reeds with patient pushes,
Soft as a long dead footstep whispering through
The brain. My brothers will be passing down
Quite soon the cornfield, where the poppies grow,
To their farm-work; how silent all will be.
But no, in this warm weather, 'mong the hills,
Will be the faint far thunder-sound as though
The world were dreaming in its summer sleep;
That will be later, day is scarcely dawning.
And Hassan will be with them—he was so small,
A weak, thin child, when last I saw him there.
He will be taller now—'twas long ago.

The men are busy in the glimmering square.
I hear the murmur as they raise the beams
To build the circling seats, where high in air
Soon will the churchmen nod above the crowd.
I'm not of that pale company whose feet
Ere long shall falter through the noisy square,
And not come thence—for here in this small ring,
Hearken, ye swallows! I have hoarded up
A poison drop. The toy of fancy once,
A fashion with us Moorish maids, begot

[*After a pause enter Ebremar.*]

Ebremar. Young Moorish girl, thy final hour is here,
Cast off thy heresies and save thy soul
From dateless pain. She sleeps—

[*Starting.*]

Mosada—thou—

Oh God!—awake, thou shalt not die. She sleeps.
Her head cast backward in her unloosed hair.
Look up, look up, thy Vallence is by thee.
A fearful paleness creeps across her breast
And out-spread arms.

[*Casting himself down by her.*]

Be not so pale, dear love.

Oh! can my kisses bring a flush no more
Upon thy face. How heavily thy head
Hangs on my breast. Listen, we shall be safe.
We'll fly from this before the morning star.
Dear heart, there is a secret way that leads
Its paven length towards the river's marge,
Where lies a shallop in the yellow reeds.
Awake, awake, and we will sail afar,
Afar along the fleet white river's face—
Alone with our own whispers and replies—
Alone among the murmurs of the dawn.
Among thy nation none shall know that I
Was Ebremar, whose thoughts were fixed on God,
And heaven, and holiness.

Mosada.

Let's talk and grieve,

For that's the sweetest music for sad souls.
Day's dead, all flame-bewildered, and the hills
In list'ning silence gazing on our grief.
I never knew an eve so marvellous still.

Ebremar. Her dreams are talking with old years. Awake,
Grieve not, for Vallence kneels beside thee—

Mosada.

Vallence,

'Tis late, wait one more day; below the hills
The foot-worn way is long, and it grows dark.
It is the darkest eve I ever knew.

Ebremar. I kneel by thee—no parting now—look up.

She smiles—is happy with her wandering griefs.

Mosada. So you must go ; kiss me before you go.
Oh ! would the busy minutes might fold up
Their thieving wings that we might never part.
I never knew a night so honey sweet.

Ebremar. There is no leave taking. I go no more.
Safe on the breast of Vallence is thy head
Unhappy one.

Mosada. Go not. Go not. Go not.
For night comes fast ; look down on me, my love,
And see how thick the dew lies on my face.
I never knew a night so dew-bedrowned.

Ebremar. Oh ! hush the wandering music of thy mind.
Look on me once Why sink your eyelids so ?
Why do you hang so heavy in my arms ?
Love, will you die when we have met ? One look
Give to thy Vallence.

Mosada. Vallence—he has gone
From here, along the shadowy way that winds
Companioning the river's pilgrim torch.
I'll see him longer if I stand out here
Upon the mountain's brow.

[*She tries to stand and totters. Ebremar supports her, and
she stands pointing down as if into a visionary valley.*]

Yonder he treads

The path o'er-muffled with the leaves—dead leaves,
Like happy thoughts grown sad in evil days.
He fades among the mists ; how fast they come,
And pour upon the world ! Ah ! well a day !
Poor love and sorrow with their arms thrown round
Each other's necks, and whispering as they go,
Still wander through the world. He's gone, he's gone.
I'm weary—wearily, and 'tis very cold.
I'll draw my cloak around me ; it is cold.
I never knew a night so bitter cold.

[*Dies.*]

Ebremar. Mosada ! Oh, Mosada !

[*Enter Monks and Inquisitors.*]

First Inquisitor. My lord, you called.

Ebrenar.

Not I. This maid is dead.

First Monk. From poison, for you cannot trust these Moors.
You're pale, my lord.

First Inquisitor. [*aside*] His lips are quivering.
The flame that shone within his eyes but now
Has flickered and gone out.

Ebrenar.

I am not well.

'Twill pass. I'll see the other prisoners now,
And importune their souls to penitence,
So they escape from hell. But pardon me,
Your hood is threadbare—see that it be changed
Before we take our seats above the crowd.

First Monk. I always said you could not trust these Moors.
[*They go.*]

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